

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3509

To address the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Iraq and potential security breakdown resulting from the mass displacement of Iraqis inside Iraq and as refugees into neighboring countries.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 17, 2008

Mr. CASEY (for himself and Mr. CARDIN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To address the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Iraq and potential security breakdown resulting from the mass displacement of Iraqis inside Iraq and as refugees into neighboring countries.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Support for Vulnerable
5 and Displaced Iraqis Act of 2008”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) Since the beginning of the 2003 war in
2 Iraq, according to countries hosting Iraqi refugees,
3 up to 2,000,000 Iraqis have fled their homes for
4 neighboring countries to avoid sectarian and other
5 violence.

6 (2) According to the Office of the United Na-
7 tions High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR),
8 there are over 2,700,000 internally displaced persons
9 (IDPs) in Iraq, and many other vulnerable Iraqis
10 have been unable to flee, many lacking adequate
11 food, shelter, and other basic services.

12 (3) The massive flow of Iraqi refugees into
13 neighboring host countries has overwhelmed existing
14 social, economic, and security capacities of such
15 countries. Few Iraqis currently consider return to
16 Iraq an option.

17 (4) Increasing poverty and despair among dis-
18 placed populations may provide fertile ground for
19 possible recruitment by extremist groups.

20 (5) The humanitarian crisis in Iraq and its
21 neighbors threatens to undermine stability in the
22 broader region.

23 (6) The United States has yet to disclose a
24 long-term comprehensive strategy to address the hu-
25 manitarian situation of vulnerable Iraqis, especially

1 mass displacement of Iraqis inside Iraq and as refu-
2 gees into neighboring countries.

3 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

4 It is the sense of Congress that—

5 (1) refugees from Iraq and vulnerable Iraqis in
6 Iraq, especially internally displaced persons, will
7 have an impact on the stability of Iraq and the re-
8 gion, and the short- and long-term effects and needs
9 of their situation must be considered within the
10 overall Iraq policy of the United States and be ad-
11 dressed at the highest levels of government;

12 (2) United States leadership is essential to sus-
13 tain and expand the response of the international
14 community, including the Government of Iraq, to the
15 humanitarian crisis in Iraq and faced by Iraqi refu-
16 gees;

17 (3) it is critical for the United States to provide
18 strong leadership on funding assistance requests
19 from the UNHCR and other international organiza-
20 tions and nongovernmental organizations providing
21 humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations in
22 Iraq, including internally displaced persons, and to
23 Iraqi refugees in neighboring countries;

24 (4) the United States should develop a long-
25 term, comprehensive humanitarian strategy in co-

1 ordination with the Government of Iraq, host coun-
2 tries, and other countries in the region, donor gov-
3 ernments, inter-governmental organizations, inter-
4 national organizations, and nongovernmental organi-
5 zations to meet the humanitarian needs of vulner-
6 able Iraqis, especially Iraqi refugees and internally
7 displaced persons, through assistance and resettle-
8 ment;

9 (5) internally displaced Iraqis and Iraqi refu-
10 gees should only return when they are able to do so
11 safely, voluntarily, and sustainably; and

12 (6) the United States should rely on assess-
13 ments of the UNHCR, which has the mandate from
14 the international community for displaced people,
15 nongovernmental organizations, and displaced Iraqis
16 themselves, in developing a long-term, comprehensive
17 humanitarian strategy to address the crisis facing
18 refugees from Iraq and internally displaced persons
19 in Iraq.

20 **SEC. 4. DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL STRATEGY.**

21 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State, in con-
22 sultation with the Administrator of the United States
23 Agency for International Development, the Secretary of
24 Defense, and the heads of other Federal agencies as ap-
25 propriate, shall develop a comprehensive regional strategy

1 to address the mass displacement of Iraqis inside Iraq and
2 as refugees into neighboring countries.

3 (b) CONTENT.—The strategy required under sub-
4 section (a) shall—

5 (1) address the serious challenges facing refu-
6 gees from Iraq, including—

7 (A) the lack of legal status recognized by
8 host governments and the inability of refugees
9 to work legally;

10 (B) inadequate UNHCR resources to reg-
11 ister more refugees from Iraq, assist them in
12 Iraq and host countries, and refer them for re-
13 settlement;

14 (C) inadequate UNHCR resources for non-
15 governmental organizations to assist refugees
16 from Iraq;

17 (D) limited access to education and
18 healthcare;

19 (E) critical food shortages; and

20 (F) inadequate shelter, drinking water,
21 sanitation, and protection;

22 (2) address the responsibility of the Govern-
23 ment of Iraq to help meet the urgent humanitarian
24 needs of its citizens in Iraq and the region and steps

1 the United States can take to provide support in this
2 area;

3 (3) include an assessment of the needs of vul-
4 nerable Iraqis in Iraq, especially internally displaced
5 persons and Iraqi refugees in the region, and an es-
6 timate of assistance required in order for the United
7 States to help meet these needs, including bilateral
8 assistance and contributions to the Office of the
9 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
10 (UNHCR), other international organizations, and
11 nongovernmental organizations providing humani-
12 tarian assistance to vulnerable populations in Iraq,
13 including internally displaced persons, and to Iraqi
14 refugees in neighboring countries;

15 (4) include the number of refugees from Iraq
16 that the United States plans to admit to and resettle
17 in the United States in order to maintain the tradi-
18 tional United States share of world-wide refugee ad-
19 missions and resettlement, participate in burden
20 sharing with host countries, and provide a robust re-
21 sponse to the protection needs of refugees from Iraq,
22 and provide an explanation and justification for the
23 number;

24 (5) include an assessment of what conditions
25 are necessary for the voluntary, safe, sustainable re-

1 turn of displaced Iraqis, relying on the evaluations
2 of the United States High Commissioner for Refu-
3 gees, nongovernmental organizations, and displaced
4 Iraqis themselves;

5 (6) include a description of the steps that the
6 United States Government has taken and will take
7 to engage the international community, including the
8 Government of Iraq, to implement the strategy and
9 the response of the international community to these
10 efforts; and

11 (7) include plans to assess the impact of the
12 strategy.

13 **SEC. 5. REPORTS.**

14 (a) RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than April 15,
15 2009, the Comptroller General of the United States shall
16 submit to the appropriate congressional committees de-
17 tailed recommendations on steps the United States can
18 take to address the humanitarian situation for vulnerable
19 Iraqis, especially the mass displacement of Iraqis inside
20 Iraq and as refugees into neighboring countries.

21 (b) COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL STRATEGY.—Not
22 later than June 1, 2009, the Secretary of State shall sub-
23 mit to the appropriate congressional committees a detailed
24 description of the comprehensive regional strategy re-

1 quired under section 4, as well as proposed timelines and
 2 budgets for implementing the strategy.

3 (c) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than December 31,
 4 2009, and annually thereafter until December 31, 2013,
 5 the Secretary of State shall submit a report to Congress
 6 on the needs of vulnerable Iraqis, the implementation of
 7 the comprehensive regional strategy, and the impact of the
 8 regional strategy.

9 **SEC. 6. APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DE-**
 10 **FINED.**

11 In this Act, the term “appropriate congressional com-
 12 mittees” means—

- 13 (1) the Committee on Foreign Relations and
 14 the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and
 15 (2) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the
 16 Committee on Appropriations of the House of Rep-
 17 resentatives.

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